

Making Progress



Korean mission team members

With the start of August, my first semester of ministry back in Japan is drawing to a close. Much of my time these past four months has been spent in mastering Japanese and growing as a spiritual leader. Because progress in these areas can be difficult to measure, I was grateful for a couple opportunities God gave me recently to put what I have been learning into practice.

Throwing A Party

As I mentioned last month, I was in charge of organizing our big *"International Friendship Party"* outreach event in July. Being the organizer meant setting the program and delegating responsibilities, as well as thinking through details like how many pieces of pizza you need to feed 100 people.

I work on an international team, and one thing I learned through this event is that expectations of leadership can vary from culture to culture. At first, I assigned tasks

without giving much instruction, assuming everyone would just figure out what to do themselves.

However, later, I often found that they had either not done things after all, or that they had done them differently than I expected because I had failed to give more specific direction. This meant I had to think through a lot of details—like the pizza—and made for a busy, stressful few weeks. But in the end, seeing everyone work so hard at their assignments to realize the vision God had given me for the event was a huge encouragement.

So how did it go? The turnout was better than expected: close to 30 new, non-Christian students came, and many had a chance to hear the gospel for the very first time. One of these students believed as a result, and another placed her faith in Christ later that week! Thank God for using this event to get the gospel out and teaching me some valuable leadership lessons in the process.

Sharing The Word

Two days later, I was invited by a Korean mission team (above) to give a gospel message at their going-away party. Though my prep time was shorter than I might have liked, God gave me a chance to share with about 20 non-Christian students, most of whom listened attentively as I spoke.

Friends assured me afterwards that what I had shared was clear and direct—maybe too direct, in fact. Their feedback showed me that being fluent does not necessarily mean I can communicate in a way that is culturally sensitive. However, since this was only my first gospel message in Japanese, I look forward to growing in this area as I speak more in the future.

Summer Schedule

You might be wondering, "What will you do once school's out for the summer?" First, we have our annual summer camp this week. The theme is "Change," and we are praying that these few days might be a turning point in the lives of all who attend—that Christians might grow and non-Christians be saved. Then, after camp ends, I will head to nearby Kyoto for a two-week mission trip with staff and students from around the country.

Hope your summer will also be an eventful one. Thank you for your prayers, and God bless!

Prayer Requests

- Continued growth as a leader and communicator of God's truth within Japanese culture
- *Upcoming events:* Summer Camp (8.7-8.9) and Kyoto Mission Trip (8.16-30)

Ryan